



OUR DANCE FACULTY

About The Coordinator

Cynthia Marafino is the artistic director of The Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Dance Program and is one of the founders and co-directors of *Blue Crew Dance*; the recreation Centers Youth dance company. Cynthia is an accomplished dancer who has been teaching dance throughout the Harrisonburg and Rockingham community for over 15 years and has over 25 years of experience dancing, choreographing, and performing. Cynthia holds a Bachelor's degree from James Madison University within Dance and English. While in college, she received training from professional instructors Cynthia Thompson, Kate Trammell, Suzanne Miller Corso, and Shane O'Hara. She has trained and performed professional works by New York artists' Crystalyn Wright and Paul Santy. She has studied with professional artists such as Finis Jhung (*Joffrey Ballet*), Tara Pennick, Malcomb Bernum, & Brandon Becker (*Richmond Ballet*), Linden Herrick (*Nevada Ballet*), & Jane Franklin (*Jane Franklin Company*). Cynthia has also had the opportunity to attend classes at *Dance Space* in New York City. Cynthia has also observed master classes by Sabirjan Yapparov (*Kirov Academy*) and The Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. Cynthia is a former rehearsal & performance director for a youth company that had the opportunity to perform in New York City. She is also a former member of several community based dance companies including the former *Harrisonburg Ballet*, *Shenandoah Contemporary Dance Theatre*, & the *James Madison University Contemporary Dance Ensemble*. Cynthia has been involved with community events such as The Harrisonburg Children's Museum, First Night Celebrations, Burg's Got Talent, and choreography for local school musicals. Cynthia has choreographed for several dance companies in the area including, *The Rockingham Ballet Theatre*, *Shenandoah Contemporary Dance Theatre*, *Blue Crew Dance*, and *The JMU Contemporary Dance Ensemble*. In addition, Cynthia's choreography received national honors at the American College Dance Festival, and her choreography won the gold at Dance Educators of America. Cynthia also works with pre-school children through Harrisonburg City Public Schools.

About The Instructors

James M. Marafino is a highly skilled teacher and choreographer who has been teaching dance for the Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation for over eight years and is one of the founders and co-directors of *Blue Crew Dance*. He has been dancing for 18 years and teaching for the past 14 years. James has studied under professional artists such as Tara Pennick (*Richmond Ballet*), Suzanne McCahill-Perrine, Suzanne Miller-Corso, Shane O'Hara, Paul Taylor, Ric Rose, Derrick Alfonso Evans, and Finis Jhung (*Joffrey Ballet*), and has also taken classes of the Simonson Technique. James has attended classes at *Steps on Broadway* in New York City. He is a former member of the youth dance company *Shenandoah Contemporary Dance Theatre*, where he performed around the area and east coast for 3 years. James has choreographed for several dance companies in the area including, *The Rockingham Ballet Theatre* and *Blue Crew Dance*. James has served as stage manager for Rockingham Ballet Theatre's *The Nutcracker* for several years and *Ballet in the Valley* (2007). James graduated from JMU where he received his Bachelor's degree and his Graduate degree in English. James teaches critical reading and writing in the Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication Program at JMU.

Caitlin McAvoy is currently pursuing theatre and psychology at JMU. While at JMU, Caitlin has been in several of the universities productions including *All Shook Up*. Caitlin has trained in professional and serious ballet and contemporary technique. She is a former member of *Rockingham Ballet Theatre* where she performed lead roles for several years including Clara in the *Nutcracker*. Caitlin has had the opportunity to attend Governors school for the performing arts and American Ballet Theatre workshops. She is also a former member of *Blue Crew Dance Company* and has had the opportunity to perform and train with a variety of professional dancers including Phillip Skaggs and Brandon Becker (*Richmond Ballet*) and Sabirjan Yapparov (*Kirov Academy*). This is Caitlin's third year teaching with Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation.

Tara See is a native of Harrisonburg and started taking ballet at the age of 5 training at a local dance studio. Upon graduating from high school, she pursued her dance training at James Madison University studying with professional instructors and guest choreographers. While at JMU she received a BS in Dance and a minor in paralegal studies. Tara is a former member of the *JMU Contemporary Dance Ensemble* where she had the opportunity to perform professional works by local and guest choreographers. While in college, Tara trained under the direction of Shane O'Hara, Kate Trammell and Cynthia Thompson. Currently, Tara works in Harrisonburg at a local law firm as a paralegal.

Mandy Ruckman is a graduate from Spotswood High School where she had the opportunity to perform in several of the High Schools musical productions including *Grease* in which she had the lead role of Sandy. Mandy will be attending Blue Ridge Community College and plans on studying teaching. Mandy is a former member of *Rockingham Ballet Theatre* where she performed lead roles for several years including Clara in the *Nutcracker*. She has had the opportunity to work with several professional artists' including Phillip Skaggs and Maggie Small (*Richmond Ballet*) and Madison McPhail (*Peridance*). We are happy to have Mandy with us!

